



**Rural transformations in the context of changing rural-urban connections**  
**The case of Njombe Town, Southern Highlands of Tanzania, and its rural hinterlands**  
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# Rural transformations in the context of changing rural-urban connections

- The case of Njombe Town, Southern Highlands of Tanzania, and its rural hinterlands

Presentation for the RurbanAfrica Conference –  
*Rural-Urban connections in Sub-Saharan Africa*

University of Copenhagen 28. January 2016

Torben Birch-Thomsen, Sinne Ørtenblad, Lukelo R. Msesse and Fulgence Mishili



## Aim of the presentation

To illustrate the dynamics of rural transformations in the context of changing rural-urban connections

By presenting data from an agricultural region

- In a general context of economic growth
- A rural transformation in the context of intensified rural-urban connections

Through a broad lens (regional perspective) as well as local variations (specific contexts/local variation)

- Illustrate how the transformation influence mobility and migration patterns
- Local/spatial variation in opportunities and challenges

Ending with a few reflections on how this impact rural livelihoods

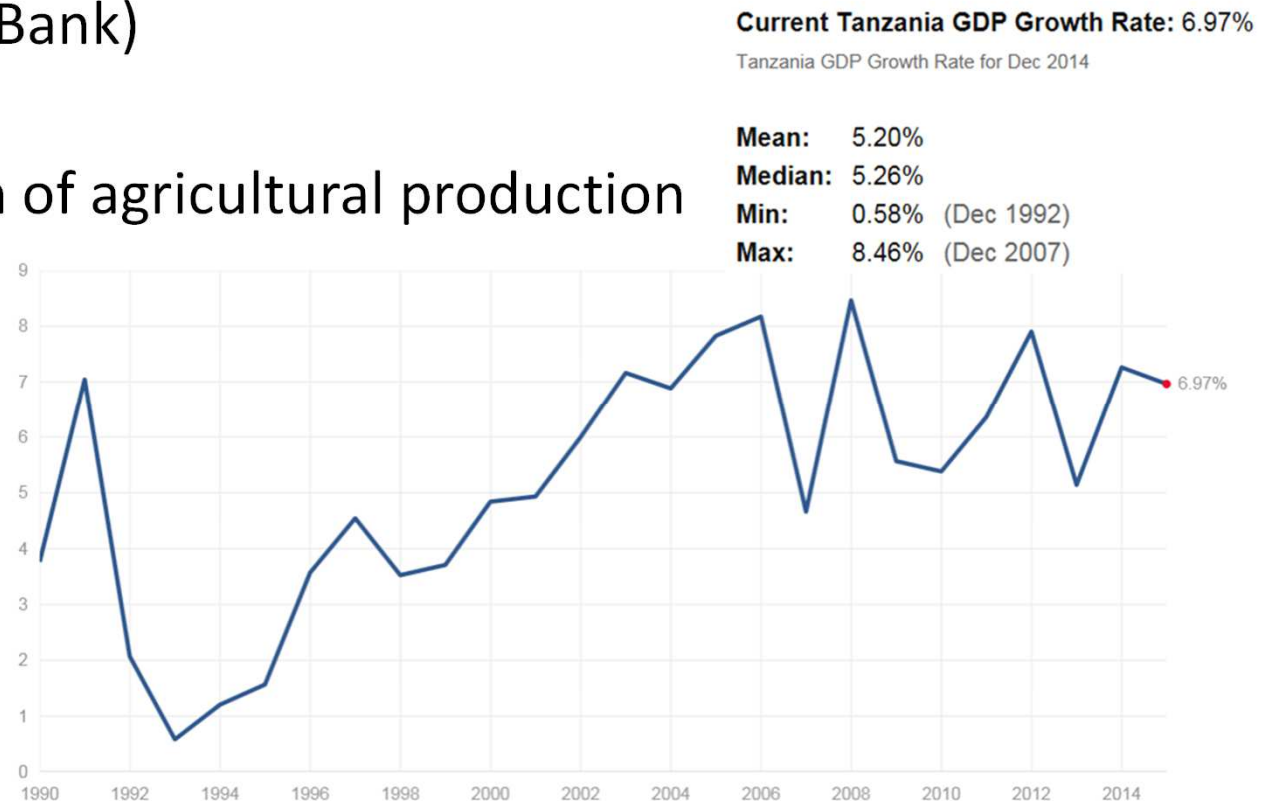


## The Tanzanian context

- Economic liberalisation since the mid-1980s
- Annual growth rates of 5.20 percent from 1990 until 2015 (World Bank)

- Commercialisation of agricultural production

- Leading to improved environment for investments



Source: [World Bank](#) > [Tanzania](#) > [Tanzania GDP Growth Rate](#)



## Rural-urban connections/linkages

In this case concerning flows of:

People, goods, capital, knowledge, technology, etc.

Rural → Urban

Urban → Rural

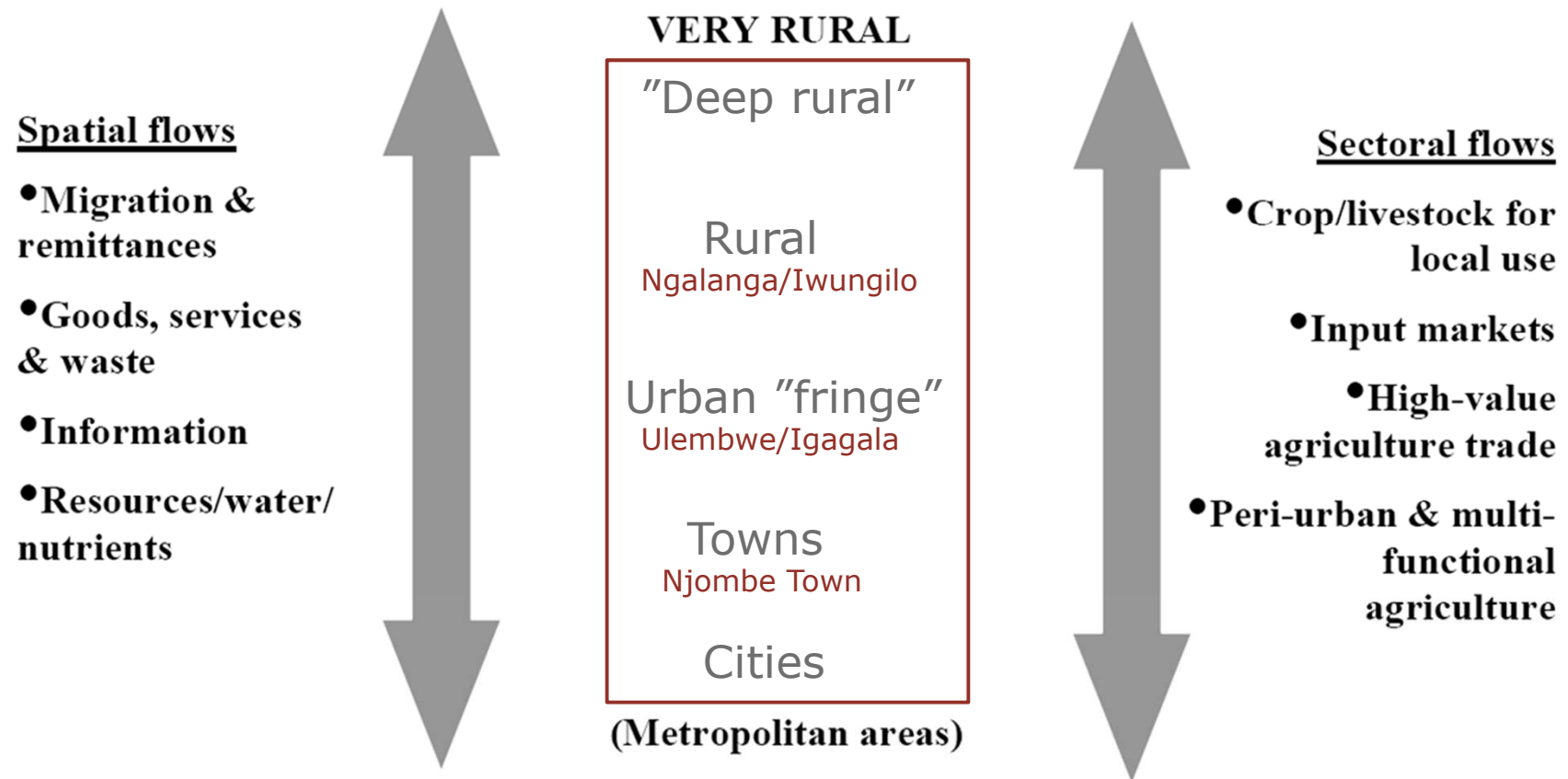
*'Rural-urban linkages include flows of agricultural and other commodities from rural based producers to urban markets, both for local consumers and for forwarding to regional, national and international markets; and, in the opposite direction, flows of manufactured and imported goods from urban centres to rural settlements'*  
(Cecilia Tacoli 2004)

However, it often happens in a continuum of rural and urban spaces!

*'Households construct their livelihoods on the basis of assets and livelihood opportunities available to them, both in town and in rural home.*

*A household combining urban and rural livelihood sources is a household with a **multi-spatial livelihood*** (Foeken & Owuor 2001)



**Figure 1. The stylized rural-urban continuum**

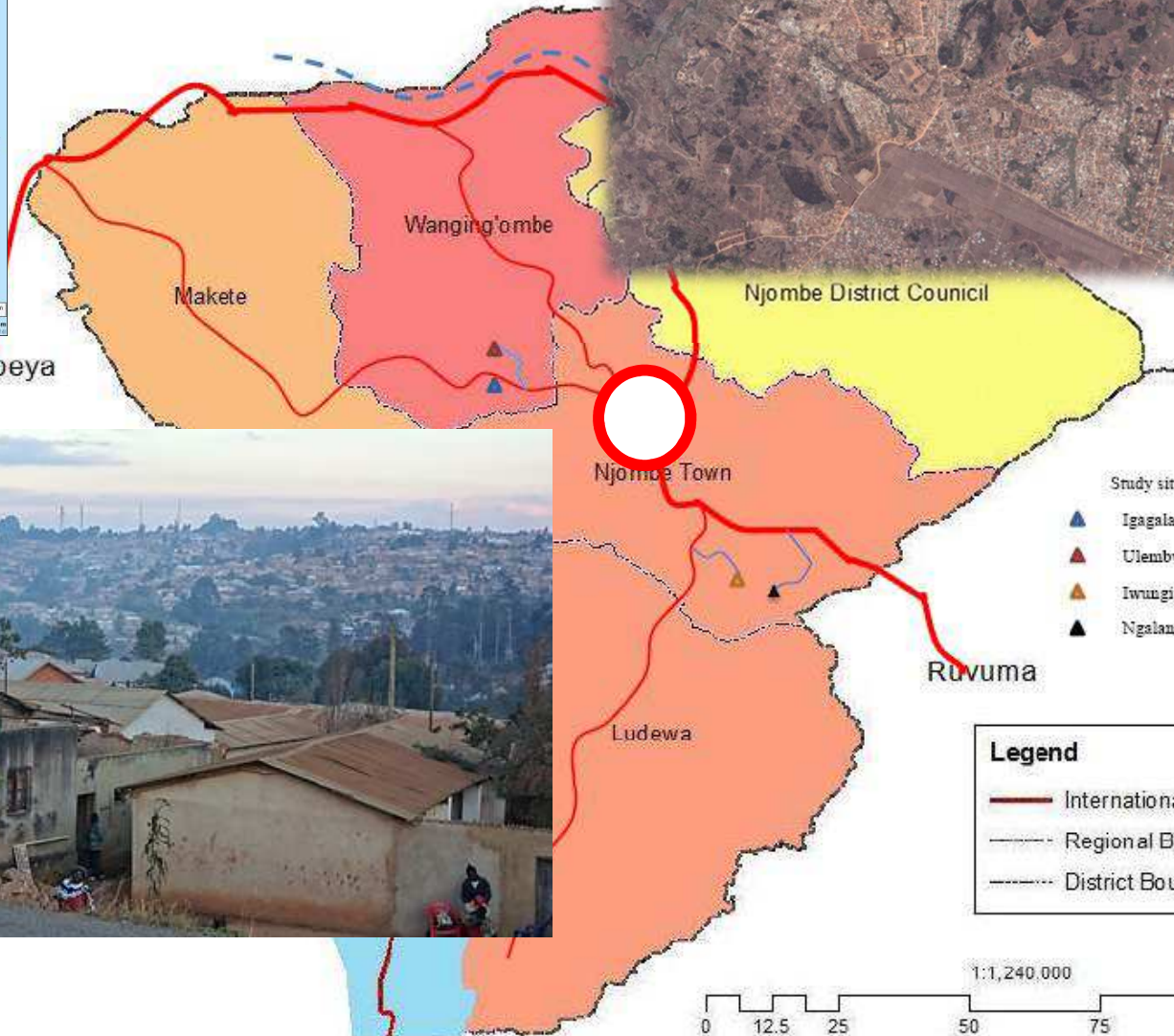
Source: Joachim von Braun (2007), Rural-Urban Linkages for Growth, Employment, and Poverty Reduction



# Njombe Context



Mbeya



Study site

- ▲ Igagala Village
- ▲ Ulembwe Village
- ▲ Iwungilo Village
- ▲ Ngalanga Village

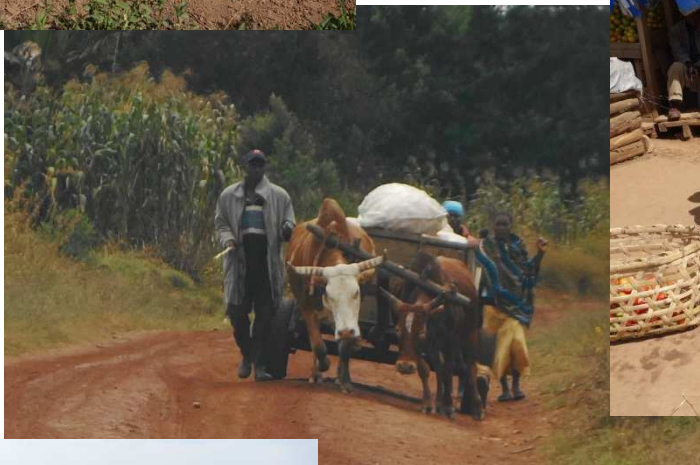
## Legend

- International Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- District Boundary





## The potatoes



## The Njombe context: A dynamic region

### General positive assessment of recent years development:

Measured as

- frequency of secondary school attendance of household members
- Improved housing
- Increased rural investments; agricultural as well as non-agricultural (LH diversification)
  - agricultural technologies (inputs, irrigation....)
  - 'urbanized' investments (shops, transport, bars ....)





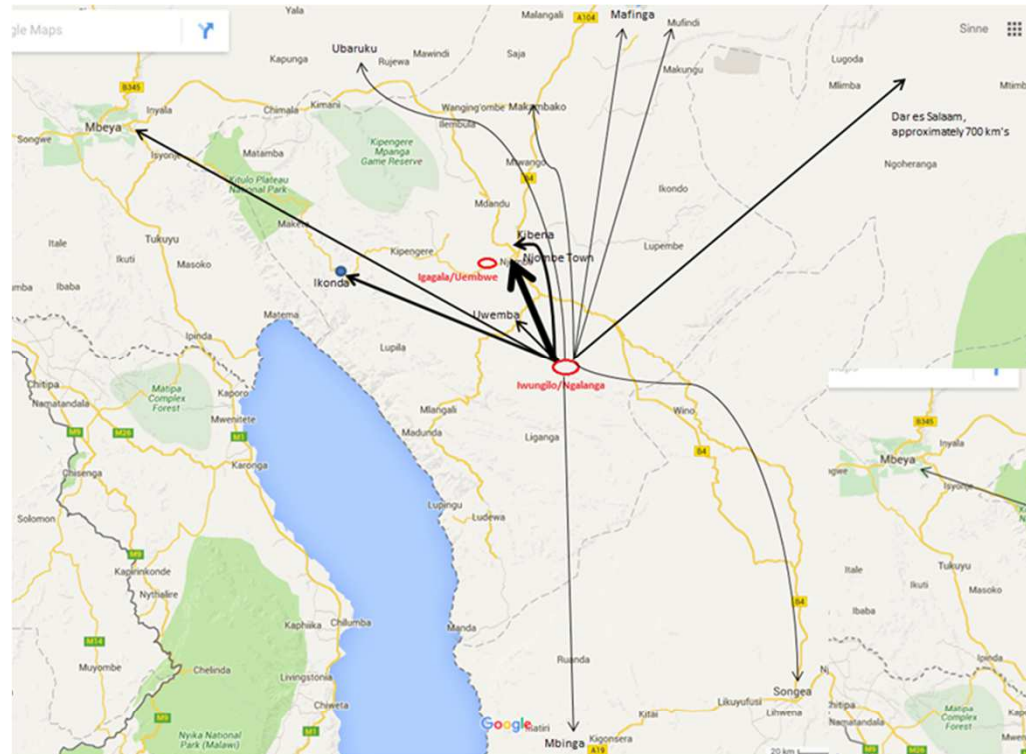
## Njombe Context

### Intensified Rural-Urban Connections

- Urban to rural investments (external investors)
- "Urbanizing" investments
- Improved communication (mobile phones, transport)
- Diversification of household activities
- Labour mobility
- Education

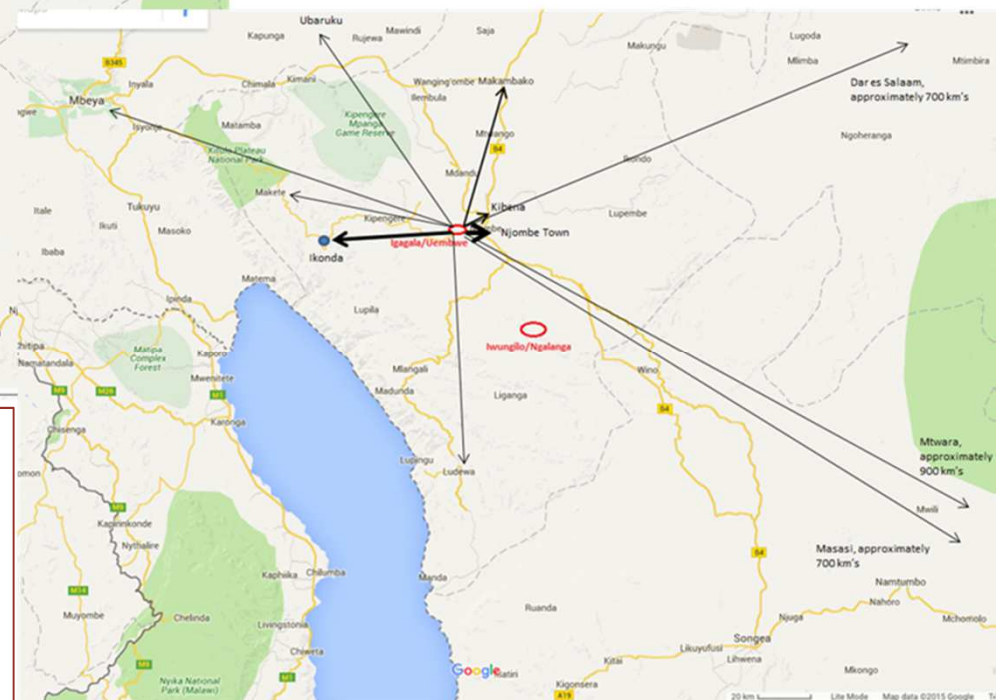


## Dynamic rural-urban connections have influenced migration and mobility patterns



Used to be dominated by R-R migration (mainly for farming) to Dodoma, Morogoro, Mbeya (Usangu) and Iringa (northern part)

Today dominated by temporary mobility – for seasonal farming or business. Many chose to stay because of the local income opportunities





## Local challenges/opportunities – specific contexts

### Expected patterns:

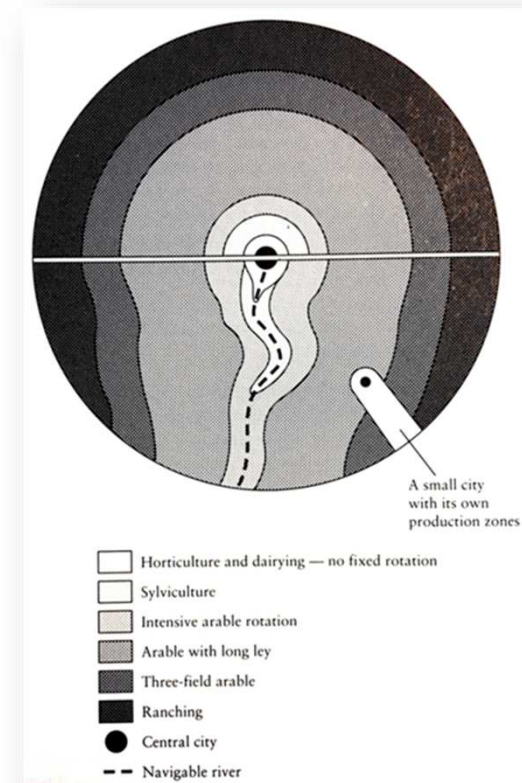
Remoteness – distance to urban centre – and infrastructure influence mobility patterns and household activities

#### "Close" to the urban centre:

- More "high frequent" mobilities (daily/weekly)  
for some and less for others
- Supporting diversified "urbanised" livelihood activities

#### Further away from the urban centre:

- Less "high frequent" mobilities in general
- More exclusive focus on farming activities (also due to land availability)



(Source: Chrisholm 1970, in Netting 1993)

## Local challenges/opportunities – specific contexts

### General public services and private enterprises

Village name (centre)	Ulembwe	Igagala	Iwungilo	Ngalanga
Number of household	897	812	499	459
Population	3678	3332	2140	1963
Health centre	1	1	1	1
Village office	1	1	1	1
Primary school	1	1	1	1
Pharmacy	2	2	1	1
General supplies shop				1
Retail shops	11	15	8	5
Mpesa kiosk	3	3	2	2
Restaurants/chips vendor	6	8	5	4
Agro input shops		1		
Milling machine	2	1		
Motorcycle repair	1	1	1	1
Butcher		1		
<b>Total number of shops/businesses</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>



## Local challenges/opportunities – specific contexts

### "The less obvious" conclusions:

#### "Increased Differentiation"

#### "Close" to the urban centre

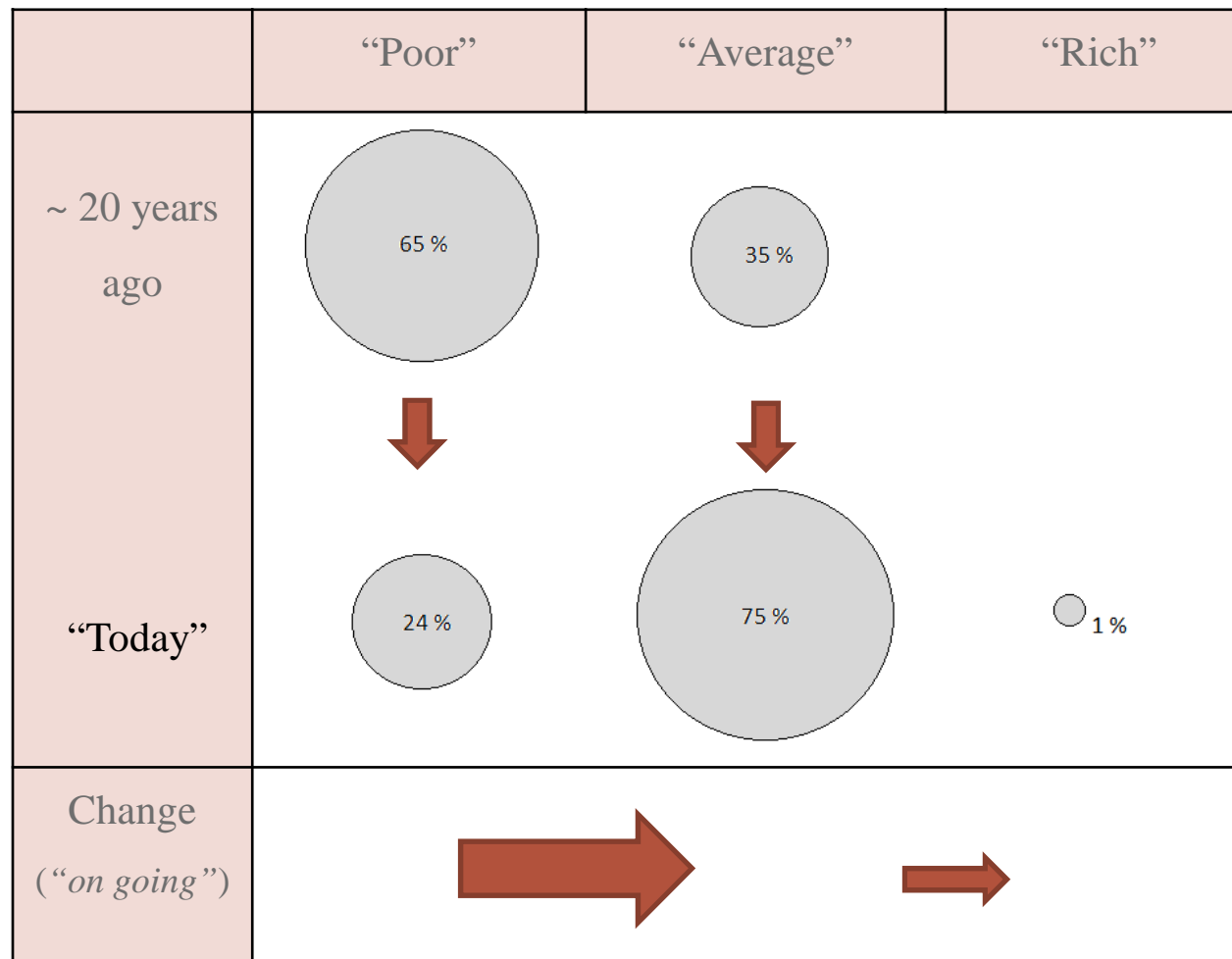
- Land shortage
- Intensive land use
  - Leading to decreasing yields



#### Further away from the urban centre:

- Land abundance
- High potential for irrigation due to landscape characteristics
  - Leading to high interest from external investors (e.g. renting/buying land; for potatoes, trees, tea and general business)

## Socio-economic mobility





## Conclusion: 'Rural-Urban Continuum'

### Multi-dimensional:

- Spatial (distance/time of travel)
- Temporal (history/stage of development)
- The dynamic nature (in constant flux)
- Diverse market opportunities ('beyond boom and bust')
- Diversified livelihoods across sectors
- Socio-economic mobility  
– for the majority

